

# forage VIEWS



February 2016



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## News from the Office

We hope that the New Year has started off on a positive note for everyone. Despite the changes here at WCFA, we are doing our best to keep things business as usual here at the office.

Tina has many extension events planned leading right into summer. You will find posters in the newsletters, on the website and our Facebook page, or in your inbox. If you have not added your name to our email list, let us know. You don't want to miss out on these events!

Speaking of events, recent seminars in Wildwood and Carvel brought information about the McDonald's Verified Sustainable Beef Pilot Project to approximately 60 local producers. For those not familiar, McDonald's is working with the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Cattle Feeders and numerous other Canadian beef cattle experts to run a pilot project to demonstrate and verify the sustainability of our Canadian beef supply.

The Pilot Project is designed to enable Canadian beef producers to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable beef production through a self-assessment process followed by independent 3rd party ranch, feedlot and processor on-site verifications. If you have questions about the program, feel free to contact us.

Fito has been busy writing reports summarizing the research findings from the summer growing season, as well as preparing protocol for this year's research. Research findings will be posted to our website, [www.westcentralforage.com](http://www.westcentralforage.com), soon.

Don't forget that membership fees are now due. You can renew on our website, in our office, or mail your \$30 payment to us.

The WCFA 2016 Annual General Meeting and Dinner is coming up on Wednesday, March 16 at Carvel Hall. Tickets are \$25 each. We are now taking registrations for the evening. You can register online, or contact us at the office.

The WCFA Team







# Species at Risk Added to Environmental Farm Plan

From the February 8, 2016 issue of Agri-News

## WCFA Board of Directors

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## Staff

Conservation Agriculture Program Manager  
Tina Pultz

Forage & Livestock Program Manager  
Fito Zamudio

## Contact

ph: 780-727-4447  
5009 45 Ave  
Entwistle AB  
Box 360, Evansburg AB T0E 0T0



Agriculture  
Opportunity Fund

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Alberta species at risk (SAR) will be better protected under a project led by the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan (EFP). The three year initiative will focus on the development of a new online tool that will help producers know about opportunities to conserve species at risk on their farms, provide them with information and resources, and enable them to assess whether they meet sustainable sourcing standards. The project will use several data sources, including GIS, to simplify and speed up the process of completing an EFP.

"This initiative is an extension of the existing EFP program," said Paul Watson, Director of Alberta EFP. "There is a growing market demand for food that is sustainably sourced. We conducted a study

last summer comparing Alberta's EFP to international standards. Our EFP scored well. The biggest gap related to species at risk and habitat protection - this project will fill most of that gap."

The main benefit in adding species at risk to the EFP is to help prepare producers for the market demand for sustainably sourced products, but there are other practical benefits:

- Maintaining the integrity of the prairie ecosystem: native grasses, plants, insects, reptiles, birds and mammals.
- Protecting our prairie heritage and western identity.
- Helping with pest control: birds of prey, snakes, badgers and weasels eat gophers, mice and other

rodents; other species feed on grasshoppers and mosquitos.

- Demonstrating good land management.

"The producer perspective is uppermost on our agenda," said Watson. "Having these groups work with us will help identify any potential concerns and find early adopters who support this mandate. We already know that finding time to complete an EFP can be challenging for producers; Alberta EFP is committed to reducing the time and effort required."

The SAR component will be added to the EFP, a self-assessment workbook that is available online or in print and will include technical tips and best management practices related to species at risk and habitat protection. Alberta producers may participate in the EFP program at no charge, and trained technicians are available to help with completing and implementing their environmental farm plans. For more details, go to the EFP website ([www.albertaefp.com](http://www.albertaefp.com)), or call 780-612-9712.

# Late winter feeding considerations

By Kristine Ely, University of Wisconsin Extension

Chances are you're not thinking about forage testing in January but maybe you should be.

Cattle producers know best that feed costs are the single largest expense in a cow-calf operation. In a study by Kansas State University, it was estimated that feed costs accounted for approximately 50% of total production costs on cow calf operations. As a producer, you need to develop a feeding program that not only ensures each animal is consuming sufficient nutrients but that it is also cost-effective to your operation. Since hay is the preferred feed of choice for cattle in winter, and judging hay on appearance alone can be misleading, you should have your hay tested to guarantee quality.

Many producers may have tested their forages before the start of winter, but if storage conditions were less than ideal, then those reports may no longer be accurate. Hay storage may contribute to losses in both dry matter and forage quality. When hay is stored at moisture levels above 20%, even barn stored hay can

lose significant quality – primarily due to spoilage and weathering. Dry matter loss in hay due to poor storage can range from 4-50%; take into account poor feeder design and you can add an additional 5-50% dry matter loss on top of that.

Mother Nature is hardly predictable when it comes to winter snow accumulations, but we can safely say that on average January and February bring the coldest temperatures of the year. In the Midwest, the critical temperature for cattle with a dry, heavy winter coat is 18°F. Energy requirements increase 1% for every 1 degree drop below that critical temperature. Heavy wind chills and a wet winter can increase demands even more. If you are only providing medium quality hay, it may not be keeping up with the nutrient needs of your cows in late gestation. If you notice cows losing condition during this time, you should refer to your forage test results and reevaluate your feeding plan. If you didn't have your forages tested prior to winter, now would be an ideal



time. It is a relatively simple procedure and an imperative to any nutrition program. The following steps will guide you in taking an accurate forage sample.

Ensure when collecting samples that you are sampling similar lots of hay – which consists of the same variety, field, cutting, and maturity. Combining samples from various lots of hay will provide you with inaccurate forage quality results. Sampling should be done at random and should be representative of the entire lot. Round bales should be sampled perpendicular to the circumference. Small square bales should be sampled from the end of the bales in the center. Samples should be collected using a coring tool. If you do not own one you should be able to borrow one from your local extension office. Collect at minimum 20 cores and combine

into a clean bucket, mix thoroughly, and fill approximately 1 pound in a clean plastic bag. Label each sample so that you can properly identify it when you receive the results. Send samples to a lab that has been certified by the National Forage Testing Association certification program. Sampling separate lots allows you to match the available forages to the nutritional needs of groups of animals in your herd.

With accurate forage quality results, you can assess your current feeding program and make any necessary changes. It is recommended that you work with your nutritionist or extension agent to make sure that your feeding program is adequate. Even with current high returns, economically feeding your animals is a way to ensure sustainable profits into the future.

# Growing Forward 2 Business Grants

Growing Forward



*Are you looking to expand, or diversify your operation? Or maybe you are looking to develop your business management skills? Well, there is Growing Forward 2 funds available to help you!*

## **Business Opportunity Program**

The purpose of the program is to help Alberta's new or established producers, agri-processing companies and producer groups enhance their competitiveness and growth prospects by connecting them with expert business advice.

Under the Growing Forward 2 Business Opportunity Program, successful applicants are eligible for reimbursement of

between 50% and 75% of certain non-capital costs related to researching and planning a new business venture.

- Eligible non-capital costs including feasibility studies for new opportunities, business plans (expansion and diversification), market research, value chain development, marketing plans, business management coaching sessions and succession plans (once per farm business).
- Established producers and processors will be reimbursed for 50% of eligible consulting fees to a maximum of \$5,000 per activity to a maximum of \$30,000 for the life of the program.

- New entrants will be reimbursed for 75% of eligible consulting fees to a maximum of \$5,000 per activity to a maximum of \$30,000 for the life of the program.
- Producer groups and agri-industry associations will be reimbursed for 75% of eligible consulting fees to a maximum of \$30,000 for the life of the program.

## **Business Management Skills Development Program**

The purpose of this program is to help Alberta's new or established producers, agri-processing companies and producer groups improve their business management skills, enhancing the industry's competitiveness and sustainability.

Under the Growing Forward 2 Business Management Skills Development Program, successful applicants are eligible for reimbursement for 75% of eligible costs for approved business skills development training courses.

- Eligible activities include courses/

programs that focus on business management skills and training – such as marketing, financial management, productivity improvement, farm safety, and leadership and human resource skill management. (To be eligible, each course/program must have a curriculum)

- Established agriculture producers, new producers, agri-processing industry staff and producer groups will be reimbursed for 75% of tuition fees or the cost to hire an instructor for a group skill training course.
- Maximum payments: Individuals can apply for multiple projects to a maximum of \$10,000 per individual for the life of the program. Groups can apply for multiple projects to a maximum of \$20,000 per application and a maximum of \$40,000 for the life of the program.

For questions, or for more information:  
Stephanie Kosinski  
780-980-4888



# Producer Partner Needed for Field-Scale Research Project



At West-Central Forage Association, we undertake forage based projects aimed at maintaining and improving the success of agriculture production in Alberta, and use extension, demonstration, and information exchange to enhance agricultural knowledge.

Sometimes, in order to undertake these projects, we partner with local producers to conduct field-scale trials on their land. We are currently looking for an interested producer to partner with to conduct a two-year demonstration project aimed to encourage the adoption of high legume pastures.

Economic and competitive livestock production is dependent on sound use of forages for the benefit of the animals and soils. Higher legume forages offer higher quantity and quality pasture over time compared to typical grass pastures. Higher legume forage stands will enable producers to maintain animals on pasture and see consistent gains longer into the grazing season compared to using the traditional, more drought-prone grasses that lose quality later in the growing season.

AgriProfit\$ benchmarks indicate that by adding legumes to pasture systems, the potential for increased carrying capacity is 20 to 100% and increased profitability is 300 to 400%. However; despite years of awareness of legume benefits in pastures, change adoption has not occurred.

In order to increase adoption, the "Improving profit, production, risk aversion and sustainability of livestock grazing systems with higher legume pastures" project will develop and promote tools to assist Alberta farms in capturing the benefits offered by incorporating higher legume pastures in their grazing systems.

What are we looking for? A local producer with approximately 10 acres of land available for the 2016 and 2017 growing seasons, on which a blend of alfalfa and Sainfoin will be established (2016) and grazed (2017).

If you are interested in partnering on this project, or if you would like more information, please contact Fito at 780-727-4447, or [forage@westcentralforage.com](mailto:forage@westcentralforage.com).

A poster for the 2016 Annual General Meeting & Supper. It features a stack of farm animals (a rooster, a pig, a sheep, and a cow) on top of a barn. The text is in red and black, providing details about the event date, schedule, and contact information. A small logo for the West-Central Forage Association is at the bottom right.

**2016 ANNUAL  
GENERAL MEETING  
& SUPPER**

MARCH 16, 2016

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

4:00-5:00 PM / ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
5:30 PM / SOCIAL & REGISTRATION  
6:00 PM / SUPPER  
7:00 PM / PROJECTS UPDATES

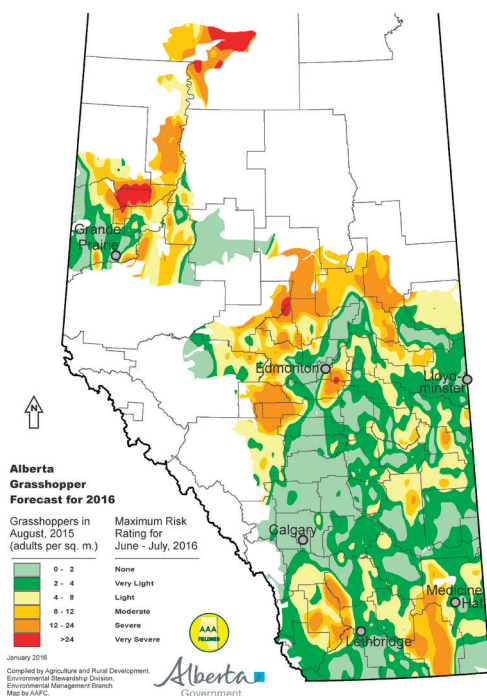
**JOIN US**

WHERE: CARVEL HALL  
WHEN: MARCH 16, 2016  
REGISTRATION: \$25 PER PERSON  
CONTACT TO REGISTER: 1-780-727-4447 OR  
[INFO@WESTCENTRALFORAGE.COM](mailto:INFO@WESTCENTRALFORAGE.COM)

WEST-CENTRAL  
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ASSOCIATION

# 2016 Grasshopper Forecast

## Alberta Insect Pest Monitoring Network



The risk of economically significant grasshopper populations in 2016 has increased in northern central Alberta and the Peace region.

In some cases the populations in 2015 were very severe.

Southern parts of central Alberta is highly variable with several areas that could cause problems in 2016.

The grasshopper risk had been increasing in southern Alberta for the last few years and although populations in southern Alberta are generally lower several areas remain with significant risk, notably in Fourty Mile (and parts

of Cypress) and Willow Creek (and western Lethbridge) counties but the overall population in southern Alberta could translate into grasshopper problems if conditions are favorable in the spring.

Areas indicated with moderate to severe risk could experience problems with grasshoppers if environmental conditions favor the hatching and development of grasshoppers in late May through June. Localized factors such as light soils or south facing slopes result in an elevated risk of grasshopper infestations. Conditions

in late spring 2016 will determine the extent of the grasshopper problems later this growing season. Infestation levels in individual fields are NOT indicated in this 2016 Grasshopper Forecast Map.

The 2016 grasshopper forecast map is based on adult grasshoppers counts conducted in early August of 2015 by participating Agriculture Fieldmen across the province. These adult counts give an indication of the number of adults at the end of the season that are capable of reproduction and egg laying. Environmental factors can result in higher or lower actual populations than forecast. Individual producers need to be aware of the potential risks in their area and monitor fields in order to be prepared to make the appropriate decisions to implement control measures.

On individual farms, particular attention should be paid to areas that traditionally have higher grasshopper populations. In addition, grasshoppers tend to lay their eggs near areas of green growth in the

fall that will provide potential food sources for emerging young the following spring. Areas with early green plant growth such as field margins, fence-lines and roadsides are also areas that will give early indications of potential grasshopper problems.

If insecticides are needed, note label precautions regarding user safety, proper application techniques and instructions to reduce impacts on non-target organisms. It is important to remember that control measures are intended to protect the crops from economic damage and are never successful in totally eliminating grasshopper populations.

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry acknowledges the commitment and support of the Agriculture Fieldmen across the province in conducting the surveys essential to the creation of this forecast. This survey was coordinated by David Brennan of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. The data management for this survey was done by Jan Lepp of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.



# PORTER *Ranches*



## SIMMENTAL BULL SALE

Friday March 18, 2016  
At the Ranch, Stony Plain, AB, 1PM

### SELLING 70 Red and Black Simmental Bulls ½ X Angus Bulls



SVS Open Range 28Y

CE	BW	WW	YW	MCE	Milk
8.6	3.8	72	97	112	16

- Fertility Tested
- Ultrasound Data
- Developed on High Roughage Diet

REA - 16.91  
IMF - 1.5  
Yield - 68%

Call or  
email  
for the  
2016  
bull sale  
brochure!



Ter-Ron Tiger 52Y

CE	BW	WW	YW	MCE	Milk
14.1	0.4	68	102	10.4	24

"Max" - SimmxAngus

REA - 15.29  
IMF - 1.7  
Yield - 66%



LFE 3091X

CE	BW	WW	YW	MCE	Milk
15.3	1.2	61	81	13.4	21.2

Heifer Bull

REA - 14.29  
IMF - 2.1  
Yield - 66%

- Affordable
- Low Birth Weights
- Big Weaning Weights



Keith  
780-968-0002  
780-915-3969



Kevin  
780-968-6772  
780-915-9823

R.R. #1 Site 2, Box 17 Stony Plain, AB T7Z 1X1

Email: [kmporter@canadasurfs.net](mailto:kmporter@canadasurfs.net)

View our catalogue online at [www.porterranches.com](http://www.porterranches.com)

Homesteaded in 1903...CS#1 #841... 1st Fifth Generation Family Farm

## Benefits of Strategic Planning



### Benefits of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning serves a variety of purposes in businesses, including to:

1. Clearly define the purpose of the operation and to establish realistic goals and objectives consistent with that mission in a defined time frame within the operation's capacity for implementation.
2. Communicate those goals and objectives.
3. Develop a sense of ownership of the plan.
4. Ensure the most effective use is made of the operation's resources by focusing the resources on the key priorities.
5. Provide a base from which progress can be measured and establish a mechanism for informed change when needed.
6. Listen to everyone's opinions in order to build consensus about where the operation is going.
7. Provides clearer focus for the operation, thereby producing more efficiency and effectiveness.
8. Bridges staff/employees and management.
9. Builds strong teams and staff/employees.
10. Produces great satisfaction and meaning among planners, especially around a common vision.
11. Increases productivity from increased efficiency and effectiveness.
12. Solves major problems in the operation.

If you haven't already done so, take the time to lay out a strategic plan now. It will help keep your small business on track and you focused on the future.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

West-Central Forage Association Extension Events

Winter 2016

## February

- 10 - Fostering Sustainability: From Field to Fork (Wildwood)
- 11 - Economic Opportunities in Sustainable Beef (Carvel)

## March

- 4 - Soil Testing Workshop (Leduc)
- 16 - WCFA Annual General Meeting (Carvel)
- 23 - Innovative Solutions to Fencing and Watering (Magnolia)
- 30 - Soil Testing Workshop (Entwistle)
- TBA - Soil Testing Workshop (Drayton Valley)

## April

- 14 - Integrated Pest Management (Calmar)
- 16 - Growing into the Future (Breton)
- 26 - Mature Shelterbelt Restoration (Location TBD)
- TBA - Alternative Energy Event (Blue Ridge)



### For information, or to register:

WCFA Office: (780) 727-4447

Email: [info@westcentralforage.com](mailto:info@westcentralforage.com)

Website: [www.westcentralforage.com/events](http://www.westcentralforage.com/events)

Facebook: West-Central Forage Association